

Message Text

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ACTION L-02

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 IO-10 ISO-00 AF-06 ARA-06 EUR-12 NEA-09

RSC-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00

ACDA-05 SAJ-01 OES-03 INT-05 OIC-02 DPW-01 NIC-01

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R 291002Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1919

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY BERN

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0429

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PARM, ICRC, VN, SN

SUBJECT: PRG ISSUE AT LAW OF WAR AND WMO CONFERENCES

REFS: A. SINGAPORE 018343; B. STATE 14506; C. STATE 10509;

D. SINGAPORE 295

1. SUMMARY: DCM AND I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER RAJARATNAM JANUARY 27 TO REINFORCE EMBASSY'S REPRESENTATIONS REPORTED REF D. JUST PRIOR TO MY CALL, THE GVN CHARGE INFORMED US THAT HE HAD MADE REPRESENTATIONS ON THE SAME SUBJECT TEN DAYS AGO AND HAD NOT YET RECEIVED A REPLY FROM MFA. ALTHOUGH RAJA SAID THAT THE GOS WOULD PROBABLY VOTE AGAINST THE PARTICIPATION OF THE PRG AT THE WMO CONFERENCE, HE SAID THE GOS HAD ALREADY INFORMED THE SECRETARIAT OF THE LAW OF THE WAR CONFERSOCE THAT SINGAPORE WOULD NOT BE REPRESENTED. DESPITE MY REPEATED URGINGS THAT GOS RECONSIDER ITS NON-CONFIDENTIAL

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PARTICIPATION, HE WAS UNWILLING TO INSTRUCT SINGAPORE'S TRADE

REPRESENTATIVE IN GENEVA TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE SOLELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF VOTING AGAINST PRG PARTICIPATION. ALTHOUGH HE AGREED TO RETHINK THE MATTER, HE MADE IT QUITE CLEAR THAT THE GOS POSITION WILL REMAIN UNCHANGED. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER REFERRING BRIEFLY TO ASSISTANT SECRETARY HABIB'S FORTHCOMING VISIT TO SINGAPORE, I RAISED THE UPCOMING LOW AND WMO CONFERENCES AND REVIEWED REASONS SET FORTH REFTELS WHY WE STRONGLY OPPOSE PRG PARTICIPATION. I NOT ONLY SET FORTH THE LEGAL REASONS WHY THE PRG DID NOT MERIT SUCH RECOGNITION, BUT ALSO STRESSED POLITICAL IMPORTANCE

OF ENSURING THAT THE PRG NOT INCREASE ITS INTERNATIONAL STANDING AND LEGITIMACY BY BEING ALLOWED TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. I NOTED THAT SINGAPORE HAD ALWAYS OPPOSED A COMMUNIST TAKEOVER OF SOUTH VIETNAM, AND SUGGESTED THAT IT WAS SURELY IN GOS INTEREST TO TAKE ACTIVE STEPS TO SUPPORT THE GVN AND ENSURE A PRG DEFEAT AT THESE CONFERENCES.

3. RAJA SAID THAT THE GOS HAD NOT ATTENDED THE FIRST SESSION OF THE LOW CONFERENCE AND HAD ALREADY TOLD THE CONFERENCE SECRETARIAT THAT THE GOS WOULD NOT BE ATTENDING THE NEXT SESSION IN FEBRUARY. HE THOUGHT IT WOULD AROUSE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION AND BE VIEWED ASKANCE IN SOME QUARTERS IF SINGAPORE WERE SUDDENLY TO REVERSE ITS DECISION AND SHOW UP JUST TO VOTE ON THE PRG QUESTION AND THEN "BUZZ OFF". HE WENT ON TO SAY THAT SINCE GOS WAS PLANNING TO ATTEND THE WMO CONFERENCE, IT WOULD PROBABLY VOTE AGAINST PRG PARTICIPATION. IN PRINCIPLE SINGAPORE WAS OPPOSED TO RECOGNIZING LIBERATION GROUPS AND FRONTS WHICH DO NOT HAVE THE ATTRIBUTES OF SOVERIGNTY. HE STATED THAT HE HAD RECOMMENDED TO CABINET A NEGATIVE VOTE AGAINST THE PRG AT THE WMO CONFERENCE AND THAT THE GOS WOULD EITHER VOTE AGAINST OR ABSTAIN. (THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE DISCUSSION HE SAID TWO OR THREE TIMES THAT THE GOS WOULD VOTE AGAINST THE PRG AT THE WMO CONFERENCE AND DID NOT REITERATE THE POSSIBILITY OF ABSTENTION.)

4. I URGED RAJA TO RECONSIDER GOS NON-PARTICIPATION AT THE LOW CONFERENCE AND NOTED THAT OTHER GOVERNMENTS SUCH AS MALAYSIA HAD DECIDED TO ACCREDIT THEIR REPRESENTATIVE IN GENEVA PRIMARILY TO VOTE ON THE PRG ISSUE. I SUGGESTED IT WAS IN THE INTEREST OF SINGA-

PORE AND ITS ASIAN FRIENDS TO GIVE WHATEVER SUPPORT THEY COULD TO
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THE GVN. I ALSO COMMENTED THAT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING THE PAST YEAR WHEN I HAD TAKEN HIGH-LEVEL VISITORS TO CALL ON THE PRIME MINISTER HE HAD STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE U.S. CONTINUING TO SUPPORT THE GVN AND THAT A COMMUNIST VICTORY IN VIETNAM WOULD JEOPARDIZE THE SECURITY OF THE REST OF SOUTHEAST ASIA. IF THIS WAS SINGAPORE'S VIEW, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THE GOS HELP THE GVN AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES. I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT IN THEIR RECENT VISITS HERE, SENATORS THURMOND AND SCOTT HAD INFORMED THE PRIME

MINISTER THAT THE TASK OF PERSUADING THE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE MORE FUNDS FOR VIETNAM WOULD BE EASIER IF THE U.S. DID NOT APPEAR TO BE STANDING ALONE.

5. RAJA NOTED THESE POINTS, BUT REITERATED THAT IF THE GOS WERE GOING TO ATTEND THE LAW OF THE WAR CONFERENCE IT WOULD BE A DIFFERENT MATTER. BUT IT WOULD BE TOTALLY OUT OF CHARACTER FOR THE GOS SUDDENLY TO REVERSE ITS DECISION TO ATTEND THE MEETING AND THEN ONLY VOTE ON THIS ISSUE. THIS WOULD NOT BE PLAYING THE GAME AND WAS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SINGAPORE 0429

NOT THE PROPER WAY A GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACT IN ITS RELATIONS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD LOOK TO SOME COUNTRIES AS IF SINGAPORE WERE GOING OUT OF ITS WAY TO PROVOKE THE PRG AND ITS SUPPORTERS. I QUESTIONED WHETHER THE GOS WOULD ATTRACT ANY MORE ATTENTION THAN OTHER GOVERNMENTS WHO ARE ATTENDING THIS CONFERENCE LARGELY BECAUSE OF THIS ISSUE, AND SUGGESTED THAT THE GOS COULD DIRECT ITS REPRESENTATIVES IN GENEVA TO ATTEND FOR

A BRIEF SPAN OF TWO OR THREE WEEKS, NOT ONLY TO COVER THE PERIOD IN WHICH PRG ISSUE MIGHT ARISE BUT ALSO TO BLUR FACT THAT PARTICIPATION WAS PRIMARILY FOR THIS PURPOSE. DCM POINTED OUT THAT PRG AND ITS SUPPORTERS HAD QUITE A DIFFERENT VIEW OF HOW TO "PLAY THE GAME" AND WERE CYNICALLY EXPLOITING INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, IN WHICH THEY HAD NOT THE SLIGHTEST SUBSTANTIVE INTEREST, FOR THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PROMOTING THEIR INTERNATIONAL STATUS. IF THOSE GOVERNMENTS OPPOSING THE RECOGNITION OF THE PRG WISHED TO PREVENT SUCH

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TACTICS FROM BEING SUCCESSFUL, IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT THEY ALWAYS BE PREPARED TO INSTRUCT THEIR EMBASSY NEAREST TO THE PLACE WHERE A CONFERENCE WAS BEING HELD TO ATTEND AND RESIST THESE TACTICS. OTHERWISE, THE PRG WOULD GRADUALLY INCREASE THEIR INTERNATIONAL STANDING, AND UNDERMINE THE POLITICAL POSITION OF SOUTH VIETNAM. RAJA READILY AGREED THAT THE PRG WAS USING THESE TACTICS, BUT WAS UNWILLING TO CONCEDE THAT THE GOS SHOULD GO OUT OF ITS WAY TO ATTEND THE LAW OF THE WAR CONFERENCE IN ORDER TO PREVENT THESE TACTICS FROM SUCCEEDING.

6. IN CLOSING, I URGED RAJARATNAM TO RETHINK THE MATTER CAREFULLY. HE PROMISED TO DO SO BUT CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT THE GOS POSITION WOULD REMAIN THE SAME.

7. COMMENT: THE GOS POSITION ON THIS ISSUE APPEARS TO BE QUITE INCONSISTENT WITH ITS BASIC POLICY ON VIETNAM. ON THE ONE HAND, PRIME MINISTER LEE URGES US TO MAINTAIN OUR SUPPORT FOR THE GVN AND THE GOS GENERALLY SUPPORTS THE GVN/US POSITION ON THE PRG ISSUE AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES WHICH THEY NORMALLY ATTEND. YET THE GOS IS CLEARLY UNWILLING TO GO OUT OF ITS WAY TO HELP US OUT AT THE LAW OF THE WAR CONFERENCE. DESPITE RAJA'S TALK ABOUT "PLAYING THE GAME" AND ACTING PROPERLY AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES, WE BELIEVE THE BASIC MOTIVATION BEHIND THE GOS RELUCTANCE ON THIS MATTER IS ITS FEAR OF PROVOKING THE PRG AND SOME OF ITS NON-ALIGNED FRIENDS FROM THE MIDDLE EAST BY APPEARING TO GO OUT OF ITS WAY TO OPPOSE THE PRG AT CONFERENCES WHICH THEY WOULD NOT OTHERWISE ATTEND. WHILE THE GOS REMAINS SYMPATHETIC TO U.S. POLICIES IN ASIA AND IS PREPARED TO BE QUIETLY HELPFUL ON MATTERS IN WHICH THERE IS LITTLE RISK TO ITSELF, THE GOS IS RELUCTANT TO EXPOSE ITSELF UNDULY TO HOSTILE CRITICISM BY COMMUNIST LIBERATION FRONTS WHOM THE GOS BELIEVES ARE LIKELY TO WIN ON THE GROUND IN CAMBODIA AND VIETNAM SOMETIME DURING THE NEXT FEW YEARS. CRONK

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